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RURAL DISTRICT OF AMESBURY

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

1948

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To the Chairman and Councillors.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for the year 1948; during which year there have been considerable changes due to the National Health Service Act and the National Assistance Act.

I would like to put on record my appreciation of the help given me by Dr. Wilson, when he handed over at the beginning of the year, and also to thank my colleagues on the Staff for their co-operation in my first year with the District.

This Report incorporates that of the Sanitary Inspector.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

D. L. Johnson,
Medical Officer of Health.

Rudge Farm House,
Froxfield, Marlborough.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area in acres	63,455
Number of Parishes	17
Population—Census 1931	16,893
Population mid-1948, as estimated by the Registrar-General	14,050
Rateable Value	£135,714
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£582
Number of Domestic Dwellings connected to main water supply	1,328

VITAL STATISTICS

	M.	F.	Total
Live Births	187	177	364
Legitimate	186	163	349
Illegitimate	1	14	15
Still Births	3	5	8
Legitimate	3	4	7
Illegitimate	—	1	1
Live Birth Rate			25.9
Live Birth Rate for England & Wales ...			17.9
Number of Deaths from all causes	72	54	126
Crude Death Rate			9.0
Crude Death Rate for England & Wales ...			10.8
Deaths of Infants under one year :—			
Total	7	7	14
Legitimate	7	6	13
Illegitimate	—	1	1
Infantile Death Rate per 1,000 live births ...			38.5
Infantile Death Rate for England & Wales ...			34.0

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The largest number of notifications was again of measles, although there were only half as many as last year. 74 cases were notified, 27 of these from Tilshead in the first four months of the year. The remaining cases occurred in various parts of the District.

Scarlet fever, with 32 notifications (1 military) showed a considerable increase over the previous year, and December was the only month which was free. There was generally no apparent relationship between the cases—in fact, often the incubation period for new cases had expired long before the disease next appeared. It may be that the common factor is streptococcal sore throats, some of which are caused by the identical organism without the appearance of a rash: as this form of disease is not notifiable it is impossible to trace the connection, but in support of this view, it is worth recording that one practitioner reported a small epidemic of sore throats at the time when there were also cases of Scarlet Fever in the area. One case, not notified, was returned by the Registrar-General as an Inward Transferable Death, the child having died from complications in a hospital outside the district. Apart from this one fatality, the disease continued to be extremely mild.

There were 30 notifications of whooping cough spread over the year, about half of them occurring in and around Shrewton.

There was one notification of Typhoid fever. The patient was removed to hospital, and although the diagnosis was never confirmed bacteriologically, the other members of the family were put under surveillance. There were no further developments.

There were no notifications of Diphtheria among the civilian population. The military authorities notified one case, and precautionary measures were undertaken by them in the usual way.

One case of Poliomyelitis occurred in an adult, the diagnosis being confirmed after removal to hospital. In view of the risk of the fæcal spread of the virus of this disease, and as his wife worked in a food shop, she was prohibited from food handling for three weeks from her last contact with him.

Other notifications were Pneumonia 2, Erysipelas 1, and Puerperal Pyrexia 2.

A table showing the monthly incidence of Infectious Diseases appears at the end of this Report.

TUBERCULOSIS

29 new cases were added to the Register, 20 Pulmonary and 9 Non-pulmonary. 6 deaths occurred, 3 being Pulmonary and 3 Non-pulmonary. 16 other cases were removed from the Register, 8 on recovery and 8 on leaving the District.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The responsibility for Diphtheria Immunisation passed to the County Council on July 5th under the National Health Service Act of 1946, and it was possible only to begin the drive to increase further the percentage of children protected in the Distrct.

It is of interest at this stage to recall the success of the Immunisation schemes carried out by this Authority. In the last 35 years the peak notifications for Diphtheria were in 1929 and 1930, when 27 and 47 cases occurred respectively, but this outbreak was curtailed by an immunisation drive. In 1940 there were 24 cases, and at the end of that year immunisation was commenced as part of the nation-wide Campaign and has been continued ever since. The effect was not fully felt in 1941 when there were 26 cases, but since then there has been a dramatic and steady fall.

The maintenance of a high state of immunity must still be of importance to this Authority if we are to continue to keep the incidence at the low level attained. With this in view I am in close touch with the County Medical Officer of Health, who at the time of writing, has already instituted a programme of school clinics, where primary and re-inforcement injections are being offered to parents of pre-school children, as well as to those of school age.

The Immunisation state of the District as at 31st December, 1948 was as follows :—

Completed Immunisations		Child Population	Percentage Immunised
Under 5	Over 5		
418	2234	3236	69.0

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT 1948

No action had to be taken under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, which came into force on 5th July, 1948.

HOUSING

Owing to the continued restrictions on building operations, action under the Housing Acts was again limited to investigation of complaints, and the service of notices for immediate and urgent repair.

There is still a large amount of overcrowding in the area, and it is still all too common to find two and even three families in one house ; In the meantime the Council are pressing on with their permanent housing schemes, which are the only real answer to this problem.

The long list of applicants for Council Houses makes the task of the Committee concerned an unenviable one. In an endeavour to assist in the final selection of tenants, the living conditions of as many applicants as time permitted were investigated by a visit to the home, and recommendations made, emphasis being put on the cases where there were large families with young children.

Work on the adaption of the war-time camp at Bulford Fields for use as temporary housing progressed slowly, and only a few were occupied before the end of the year.

WATER SUPPLY

The Public supplies owned and operated by the Council are in the parishes of Amesbury, Bulford and Durrington, and Shrewton.

Amesbury. The quantity of water in the two bores does not vary greatly and a sufficient supply is ensured for existing consumers, including the large service installations at Amesbury Abbey and Boscombe Down. In order to ensure this amount, however, the present pumps must be worked to capacity, and any appreciable new demands may entail some form of extension to the existing works.

Shrewton and Bulford & Durrington. These supplies continue to function satisfactorily. There is ample reserve for future connections in both schemes.

The under-mentioned parishes are supplied from privately owned water schemes :—

Cholderton (Cholderton Water Co.);

Wilsford & Lake (Lt.-Col. F. G. Bailey);

Tilshead. This village is at present supplied by a 1″ main taken from a nearby W.D. supply. No connections are made to individual premises, but there are 7 stand pipes in various parts of the village. The Council are arranging for a 4″ pipe to be taken through the village, with individual connections to each house.

Regular samples from all the above supplies were submitted for bacteriological examination, and were free from contamination. One chemical sample from each also proved satisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Tests of the effluent taken from the Amesbury sewerage disposal plant by the County Public Health Authorities were satisfactory, although the plant is still working to capacity.

Bulford & Durrington. The Council were still in communication with the Ministry of Health and War Department concerning the sewage scheme for these two Parishes.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

The system of separate alternate collection of salvage and refuse was continued during the year. There was again a slight increase in the amout of salvage sold to Contractors. The system of controlled tipping was improved, and is now working satisfactorily.

RODENT CONTROL

The work of rodent control was continued with satisfactory results in the areas coming under the control of the Authority. Most of the District still comes under the Wiltshire Agricultural Committee or the Service Departments for this purpose.

MILK SUPPLY

Inspections under the Milk and Dairies Order were continued during the year, and routine visits made to farms in the area : where hygiene of premises was poor additional visits were made, and improvements resulted in most cases. In the case of one dairy, whose premises are totally inadequate for the quantity of milk handled, the firm's application for permission to build was strongly supported on Public Health grounds, and a licence to build was obtained.

FACTORIES ACT 1937

There are 38 factories on the register, and 47 inspections were made. Eleven defects were found, and all but one remedied by the end of the year. There are no out-workers under Sections 110 and 111.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS

INSPECTIONS	No. of Inspections 1	No. of Defects 2	Informal Notices 3	Statutory Notices 4	Remedied by 3 5	Remedied by 4 6	Remedied after verbal notice 7
Public Health Act 192							
,, ,, ,, (Reinspections) 153							
——	345	23	15	—	15	—	8
Slaughterhouses	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Knackers' Yards	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Places where food is prepared ...	53	3	—	—	—	—	3
Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops	314	37	6	—	6	—	29
Butchers' Shops	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moveable Dwellings	84	2	—	—	—	—	2
Bakehouses ...	36	5	—	—	—	—	5
Ice Cream Premises	18	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	880	70	21	—	21	—	47

Not classified above

Housing Act	79	
Housing Act Reinspection	116	
	——	195
Infectious Diseases		27
Unclassified visits and inspections (drainage, refuse collections, bye-laws etc.)		358
Water Samples taken		20
Total Number of Visits		1480

MILK AND DAIRIES ETC.

Number of Wholesale Producers registered 1948	91
Number of Retail Purveyors registered 1948	41
Number of Certificates Issued (Producers) during 1948 ...	2
Number of Certificates Issued (Retailers) during 1948 ...	1

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS CONDEMNED

Tinned Meat	12 lbs.
Tinned Fruits	3 tins
Bacon	38 lbs.
Poussins	42
Fish	183 lbs.
Biscuits	28 lbs.
Cheese	88 lbs.
Cake	285 lbs.
Cornflakes	1,032 lbs.
Cauliflowers	3 tons

MONTHLY INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTAL
Scarlet Fever	1	1	2	1	4	3	5	9	2	1	3	—	32
Diphtheria	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Typhoid	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Pneumonia	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Erysipelas	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Dysentry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Malaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0
Measles	1	6	13	11	1	20	15	5	1	—	1	—	74
Whooping Cough ...	2	—	—	1	—	5	—	3	—	9	7	3	30

CAUSES OF DEATH

AS RETURNED BY THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL

		M.	F.	Total
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	—	—	—
2	Cerebro Spinal Fever	—	—	—
3	Scarlet Fever	—	1	1
4	Whooping Cough	—	—	—
5	Diphtheria	—	—	—
6	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	—	3	3
7	Other Forms of Tuberculosis	2	1	3
8	Syphilitic Diseases	—	—	—
9	Influenza	—	—	—
10	Measles	—	—	—
11	Acute Poliomyelitis and Polio Encephalitis	—	—	—
12	Acute Infectious Encephalitis	—	—	—
13	Cancer of Buccal Cavity and Oesophagus (M) and Uterus (F)	—	—	—
14	Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum ...	—	1	1
15	Cancer of Breast	—	1	1
16	Cancer of all other sites	13	5	18
17	Diabetes	—	—	—
18	Intracranial Vascular Lesions	7	3	10
19	Heart Diseases	16	19	35
20	Other Diseases of Circulatory System ...	5	2	7
21	Bronchitis	1	—	1
22	Pneumonia	4	2	6
23	Other Respiratory Diseases	2	—	2
24	Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	2	1	3
25	Diarrhœa—under 2 years	—	1	1
26	Appendicitis	1	—	1
27	Other Digestive Diseases	3	2	5
28	Nephritis	1	2	3
29	Puerperal and Post Abortional Sepsis ...	—	—	—
30	Other Maternal Causes	—	1	1
31	Premature Births	3	3	6
32	Congenital Malformations, Birth Injuries and Infantile Diseases	5	2	7
33	Suicide	—	—	—
34	Road Traffic Accidents	—	1	1
35	Other Violent Causes	1	—	1
36	All Other Causes	6	3	9
	All Causes	72	54	126

F. JAY & SON
BEDWIN STREET
SALISBURY